SKATEBOARDING ON FILM

COLL 165 Spring 2018

Contact Information

Instructor: Michael Moran
Classroom: 303 Sewall Hall
Regular Meeting time: Tuesdays 7pm-8pm
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Faculty Sponsor: Adrian Lenardic (ajns@rice.edu)

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course explores the intersection of film and skateboarding as a medium for understanding culture associated with skateboarding and longboarding. We will explore the question, **how can film be used as a lens through which we can understand boarding culture?** As a result of this course, one can expect to gain a better understanding of the history of skateboarding, what it means to be a skater, and how the invention of portable and affordable filming devices has affected the creation of a subculture. This understanding will be achieved by listening to guest lectures, reading interviews and academic papers, as well as watching and discussing video content related to skateboarding from the past 35 years. Furthermore, students will spend time on the skateboard as a means of contextualize the culture being analyzed. The class will culminate in a group project creating your own skate film. In this film, students will be free to explore whatever perspectives from throughout the semester were most engaging to them. This could range from a documentary exploring a particular boarding culture, to a short skate part looking at the importance of sound in impactful video.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and compare different currents in boarding culture
2. Discuss the coevolution of skateboarding and the filming of it
3. Create an original skate film
4. Improve personal ability to ride and perform tricks on a skateboard
5. Analyze the effect of cinematographic qualities, music, and storytelling in film

Required Texts and Materials

1. While having a skateboard for the class would be ideal, especially for continued learning outside of the classroom, we have 14 class skateboard that will be made available to check out throughout the semester.

2. Similarly, having your own camcorder or DSLR for the class could be helpful when filming the final project. However, but you are welcome to use iPhone cameras or rent equipment from the DMC instead.
3. All readings and videos required for discussion will be provided on the class Canvas page or for viewing during class.
4. There will be trips to the skatepark. We will do our best to provide transportation, but you may have to use a car or public transit in order to participate.
5. It is required that you have closed toe sneakers (ideally with a flat sole) and a helmet when riding a skateboard for class. We have some helmets available to be checked out for the class.

Assignments

You must complete ALL of the following assignments to pass the class

- **Final Project (30%):** Work in groups of 2 to 4 to create your own skate video. This is an opportunity for students to be creative and show any aspect of skateboarding that they found interesting throughout the semester. It could be anything from a video teaching someone how to do a trick, to a set of interviews exploring the female skate community. Grading will be based on creativity and relevancy to videos and materials explored throughout the semester.
- **Homeworks Assignments (40%):** Each week there will be assignments to watch videos and create something small in response. There will be about 8 homework assignments this semester and they will collectively be worth 40% of your grade. Watching the videos and complete the corresponding assignment are highly encouraged to be ready for class each day.
- **Class Participation & Classtime Projects (30% of grade)** – This class is highly interactive. Your regular attendance, preparation, and active participation in the course is required.

Grade Policies

Over 60% is passing, 59% or under is failing. Please pass.

Absence Policies

This class requires a high level of interaction and engagement with your fellow students and me. If you will be absent from class please let me know prior to the absence and we can arrange an alternative assignment. More than two absences will affect your grade.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar

with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Disability Support Services

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Board Safety

Suggestions are created in collaborations with Renee Block from Rice Risk Management office. If you have any questions regarding the safety of what you are doing, please consult the instructor first.

General Guidelines

- Use a quality skateboard (check out one of the class boards or ask for advice when purchasing).
    - Shorter decks are best for beginners.
- Inspect the skateboard before every ride.
- Get professional help or consult instructor regarding repairs to board.
- Learn the basic skills first (i.e. how to stop properly, slowing and turning techniques, and how to fall). Be careful with tricks and jumps, this requires experience.
- Wear protective equipment – properly fitted helmet, shoes, knee and elbow pads.
- Know who to call in case an accident happens (Emergency, call REMS: 713-348-6000).

In-Class Guidelines

Besides following the guidelines above, keep the following in mind:

- We will be skating on the road and small parking lot behind KEK Hall on campus due to its good lighting and lack of traffic. We will always request the space from RUPD before using it.
- Be sure to respect the space of pedestrians and other people on their board. Try to leave 6 feet between riders in order to avoid collisions.

Out-of-Class Guidelines

- Skate on paved roads and sidewalks that have little traffic and good lighting.
- Do not skate under covered paths on Rice campus.
- Respect your surroundings (living and built).

Course Schedule

1. Tuesday, January 9, 2018

- Introductions, distribute skateboards, and course expectations

2. Tuesday, January 16, 2018 - NO CLASS (Snow Day)

- **Homework**
  - Watch Skating in Snow (2013, 1:50)
  - Watch Alan Gerlach's True Color Primitive Snowskate Part (2009, 4:38)

3. Tuesday, January 23, 2018

- Meet faculty advisor, Adrian Lenardic (ajns@rice.edu)
- Class Activity: Get into pairs to take apart skateboards and swap trucks with a partner and reassemble boards.
- Lesson: Introduction to the Evolution of Skateboarding (and film)
- After class: Sewall Plaza skate session
- **Homework 1**
  - Watch Powell Peralta's Bones Brigade Video Show (1984, 34:19)
  - Watch this panel interview (2010, 13:20) with the skaters and skate filmers involved in this video at NYC MoMA
  - Submit a screen capture from the video that you will recreate at the skatepark next class

4. Tuesday, January 30, 2018

- Visit Lee & Joe Jamail Skatepark from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- **Classwork 1 (results)**: Take a picture of someone in the class or someone at Jamail inspired by the screen capture of Bones Brigade from the last homework
- **Homework 2 (results)**
  - Watch Wheels of Fire (1987, 42:30)
  - Watch first 9 minutes of this video (or skim through the video) for context on Wheels of Fire
  - Pick a 4-12 sec clip of your most or least favorite shot and explain why in a few sentences

5. Tuesday, February 6, 2018

- Review of photos from last classwork and clips from last homework
- Class Activity: Skate trick naming conventions
- Lesson: Conclusion to the Evolution of Skateboarding (and film)
- **Homework**
  - Watch Ryan Kao's How to Film a Cinematic Sequence (2016, 6:39)
  - Watch Every Frame a Painting's Composing Movement (2015, 8:24)
  - Watch ESPN Skate on Film (2012, 22:02)
  - Watch skate intro sequences playlist: https://vib.by/v/QJdYja-WS (~15min)
  - Check out the work of Brandon Martin (on Rice's YouTube www.youtube.com/user/RiceUniversity) in preparation for our workshop with him next week.
  - (Nothing is actually due besides watching the videos on account of Spring Recess)

6. Tuesday, February 13, 2018

- Brandon Martin Guest Workshop
  - **MEET AT THE OLD TENNIS COURTS** that are now a parking lot behind Tudor Fieldhouse. We will be doing hands on filming this day and that area is well lit. Please bring your phones or video cameras if you have them.
  - The videographer for Rice University and manager of their YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/RiceUniversity) will lead a workshop on composition and sequencing.
  - We will split into small groups and each film our own intro to a skate video part.
  - **Classwork 2**: Upload footage from workshop
- **Homework 3**
  - Edit the footage collected during class workshop
  - Watch playlist of skate parts: https://vib.by/v/m1eH1bf-B

7. Tuesday, February 20, 2018

- Show edited videos from last class's workshop
- Storytelling and Skateboard Skits Workshop
  - Watch clips from Ty Evan's and Spike Jonze's Girl - Yeah Right! (2003, 1:11:35) & Lakai - Fully Flared (2007, 1:29:02)
- **Homework 4**
  - Watch Backstreet Atlas (2013, 22:34)
    - Interview with the filmmakers: read or watch this 2012 interview with Adam Abada and Zach Baker from Backstreet Atlas

    - Write a script for your next video

8. Tuesday, February 27, 2018

- "Journey" Filming Activity
    - **Classwork 3**: Upload footage
- Optional trip to skatepark (Jamail, North Houston, or DIY spot) this week (**extra credit**: will replace the grade of any missed classworks or homeworks)
- **Homework 5**
    - Edit footage from filming
    - Watch Berrics Shoot All Skaters: Ty Evans (2015, 25:44) part 1 & part 2

9. Tuesday, March 6, 2018

- Show "Journey" films shot during last class
- Lance Childers screening of The Gold Line (trailer: https://vimeo.com/235469336)
- **Homework**
    - Watch Northbound (2017, 8:38)
    - Watch One Day Skate Project (2014, 27:11)

10. Tuesday, March 13, 2018 - NO CLASS (Spring Break)

- Make plans for subject of final film project
- Watch videos from inspiration playlist

11. Tuesday, March 20, 2018

- Start discussing **final projects** and getting in groups!!!
- **Homework**
    - Watch The Cinematographer Project (2012, 1:08:37), a collection of 3-5 minutes shorts from13 of skateboarding's finest filmmakers (Torsten Frank, Bill Strobeck, Mike Manzoori, Chris Ray, Brennan Conroy, Dan Wolfe, RB Umali, Beagle, Lee Dupont, Christopher Middlebrook, Jon Holland, Russel Houghten, Alien Workshop) The Cinematographer Project (2012, 1:08:37)
    - Start filming final projects!

12. Tuesday, March 27, 2018

- Class time to work on final projects

- **Homework**
  - Watch This Ain't California (2012, 1:40:00) documentary film on skateboarding in East Germany. 4 gig download link and interview to read after watching.
  - Continue filming final projects. Bring footage to next class!

13. Tuesday, April 3, 2018

- Every group must present some of the clips they have been collecting for feedback from the class.
- Class time to work on final projects
- **Homework**
  - Watch Berrics' Shoot All Skaters Mike Manzoori (2016, 14:51)

14. Tuesday, April 10, 2018

- Class time to work on final projects

15. Tuesday, April 17, 2018

- **DUE: Final project**
- Final project video screening
- Race around the inner loop

NOTE: See class Canvas page for more assignment details and resources